

A Water Rights Case at the Supreme Court, Spring 2021

For those interested in conservation, water quality, or simply modern convenience, water usage can be a complex topic. Where our water comes from, where it goes when we have used it, and who (or what) else might need to use it are all important questions! As residents of a state with several decades of experience working to improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay, many Virginians have become more familiar with initiatives that include: raising [awareness](#) about [stormwater management](#), learning how industry interacts with our [drinking water](#) and [water resources](#), and what it is like to be a part of [large scale, long term](#) environmental programming that [involves more than one state](#).

But we might be quick to forget that we are not the only watershed dealing with the complexities of balancing public and private issues with environmental ones, and an interesting case study has been [unfolding south of Virginia](#). Recently, the [Supreme Court decided unanimously](#) to dismiss a lawsuit between the state of Florida and the state of Georgia surrounding the flow of water in the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint Basin.

Arguments focused on declining environmental characteristics in the Florida

Gulf as they potentially relate to water usage further up in the headwaters of the drainage basin in Georgia, including the water usage of metro Atlanta and agricultural communities in southern Georgia. While this specific case had been ongoing for over 8 years, water usage within the region has been a [contentious issue since 1990](#). As we are a part of our own large-scale environmental effort within the Chesapeake Bay region, it is important to not only be creative about problem-solving and reaching consensus but to also reflect on and learn from similar circumstances of [complexity and scale](#).

I encourage you to follow the above links and to read more about the ongoing work to ensure the best use of water resources in Alabama, Florida, and Georgia, as well as right at home in the [Colonial Soil & Water Conservation District](#).

